

**21st Century Community Learning Center  
Validated After-School Program  
Observation Instrument (VASPOI)  
VASPOI COVER SHEET**

CO-OBSERVED?

☐ Yes

☐ No

CO-OBSERVERS' INITIALS:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

|  |                                     |  |                                     |  |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>School Number:</b>  | <b>Observer Initials:</b>           | <b>Observation Number:</b>   | <b>Room Number:</b>                 | <b>Date (MM/DD/YR):</b>                            | <b>Start Time:</b>                             | <b>End Time:</b>                    |
| <b>ACTIVITY NAME:</b>  |                                     |  |                                     |  |  |                                     |
| <b>ACTIVITY TYPE</b><br>(Check all that apply)                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>TYPE OF SPACE</b><br>(Check one)  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>TOTAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH</b>                    |  | <b># start</b> <b># end</b>         |
| Homework help/Tutoring (circle)                                  |                                     | Classroom  |                                     | Total Number of Girls                              |  |                                     |
| Academic activities (not homework)                               |                                     | Gym  |                                     | Total Number of Boys                               |  |                                     |
| Story reading/listening  |                                     | Computer Lab   |                                     | <b>GRADE LEVELS</b><br>(Circle all that apply)     |  |                                     |
| Arts and crafts (visual arts; graphics)                          |                                     | Library  |                                     | PreK   | K  | 1                                   |
| Dance, music, drama,   |                                     | Cafeteria  |                                     | 2  | 3  | 4                                   |
| Sports—practicing/learning a skill                               |                                     | Auditorium   |                                     | 5  | 6  | 7                                   |
| Sports—playing competitive or non-competitive physical games     |                                     | Art Room   |                                     | 8  | 9  | 10                                  |
| Open, unstructured time (e.g., table games, Internet, free play) |                                     | Music Room   |                                     | 11   | 12   | Other:                              |
| Teacher-assigned learning games (dominos, chess, etc.)           |                                     | Hallway  |                                     | <b>GROUPING PATTERNS</b><br>(Check all that apply) |  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Community service  |                                     | Outside Playground   |                                     | Large (15+)  |  |                                     |
| College/career preparation                                       |                                     | Other:   |                                     | Medium (6-14)                                      |  |                                     |
| Computer skill development/other computer use (circle)           |                                     | <b>TOTAL STAFF</b>   | <b># start</b>                      | <b># end</b>                                       | Small (3-5)                                    |                                     |
| Cultural awareness clubs/projects                                |                                     | High School Student  |                                     |  | Pairs (2)                                      |                                     |
| Snack/preparing for snack  |                                     | College Student or Young Adult   |                                     |  | Individuals working alone                      |                                     |
| Cleanup/Transition   |                                     | Certified Teacher  |                                     |  | <b>GROUPING TYPE</b><br>(Check all that apply) |                                     |
| Other:   |                                     | Other Adult  |                                     |  | By age or grade                                |                                     |
| <b>SKILLS TARGETED</b><br>(Check all that apply)                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____   |                                     |  | By interest (child's choice)                   |                                     |
| Physical/athletic  |                                     |  |                                     |  | All attendees (in the project)                 |                                     |
| Artistic   |                                     |  |                                     |  | Other:   |                                     |
| Mathematics/numeracy   |                                     | <b>ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT</b><br>At the end of the 15-minute observation, complete the following: |                                     |  |  |                                     |
| Reading/literacy/writing   |                                     | Is the level of adult supervision appropriate to activity and age group?                         |                                     |  | Yes  | No                                  |
| Decision-making/Problem-solving                                  |                                     | Is the work space conducive to the activity type?  |                                     |  | Yes  | No                                  |
| Interpersonal  |                                     | Are special materials needed for this activity?  |                                     |  | Yes  | No                                  |
|  |                                     | →If so, are materials in sufficient supply?  |                                     |  | Yes  | No   NA                             |
| No specific skill/Other:   |                                     | Are youth working on a skill-building activity?  |                                     |  | Yes  | No                                  |

## VASPOI DOMAIN ITEM RATINGS

After 15 minutes of observation, assign a rating of 1 (not evident) to 7 (highly evident and consistent) for each item below. To select a rating, first move to the ODD NUMBER that most closely reflects how evident and pervasive an item is. If that number does not precisely reflect the level of evidence observed, then move down or up to the adjacent even number that more accurately reflects the item's level of presence within an activity. The "5" rating is also used in cases where the exemplar's presence is "neutral." For instance, if youth are generally friendly to each other throughout the observation, but most do not go beyond the casual, friendly interaction, the rating would be a "5."

|                         |             |                            |             |                                      |             |   |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|---|
| -----1-----             | -----2----- | -----3-----                | -----4----- | -----5-----                          | -----6----- | -----7-----                               |
| Exemplar is not evident |             | Exemplar is rarely evident |             | Exemplar is evident but inconsistent |             | Exemplar is highly evident and consistent |

### RATINGS:

| RELATIONSHIP BUILDING : All or most YOUTH |  | PARTICIPATION: All or most YOUTH |  |
|---|--|----------------------------------|--|
| A   | <b>Are friendly to each other.</b> Youth socialize informally. They are relaxed in their interactions with each other. They appear to enjoy one another's company.   | F                                | <b>Are on-task.</b> Youth are focused, attentive, and not easily distracted from the task/project. They follow along with the staff and/or follow directions to carry on an individual or group task.  |
| B   | <b>Show respect for one another.</b> Youth refrain from causing disruptions that interfere with others accomplishing their own tasks. When working together, they consider one another's viewpoints. They refrain from derogatory comments or actions about the individual person and the work s/he is doing; if disagreements occur, they are handled constructively.                           | G                                | <b>Listen actively and attentively to peers and staff.</b> Youth listen and respond to each other and staff. They are respectful and attentive. They look at peers and/or staff when they speak, and they provide concrete and constructive feedback about ideas or actions.   |
| C   | <b>Show positive affect to staff.</b> Youth have friendly interactions with staff; they smile, laugh, or share good-natured jokes.   | H                                | <b>Contribute opinions, ideas and/or concerns to discussions.</b> Youth discuss/express their ideas and respond to staff questions and/or spontaneously share connections they've made. This item refers to sharing that is part of the activity and within the class norms. Calling out—or disruptively talking out of turn—is not part of this item. |
| D   | <b>Are collaborative.</b> Youth work together/share materials to accomplish tasks. This item can include working together on assigned teams, if youth are working together to get a better result or complete a game. This item is different from item E (below), because in collaboration, youth are equal partners in the work (rather than one student assisting/mentoring/tutoring another). | I                                | <b>Have opportunities to make meaningful choices.</b> Within this activity, youth choose what they do, how they do it, and/or with whom they collaborate, and they experience the consequences of their choices. This item refers to genuine options, not simple choices such as choosing between two types of games, or two sets of homework pages.   |
| E   | <b>Assist one another.</b> Youth formally or informally reach out to help peers and help them think about and figure out how to complete a task. This item refers to assistance that is intentional and prolonged, going beyond answering an incidental question.  | J                                | <b>Take leadership responsibility/roles.</b> Youth have meaningful responsibility for directing, mentoring or assisting one another to achieve an outcome; they lead some part of the activity by organizing a task or a whole activity, or by leading a group of youth within the activity.   |

| RELATIONSHIP BUILDING: With all youth, STAFF |  | SKILL BUILDING AND MASTERY: STAFF |   |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| K  | <b>Use positive behavior management techniques</b> that allow youth to accomplish the activity's objectives. They set appropriate limits and communicate clear expectations for behavioral standards, and these are appropriate to the age of the youth and the activity type. When disciplining youth, staff do so in a firm manner, without unnecessary accusations, threats, or anger.                          | R                                 | <b>Communicate goals, purpose, expectations.</b> Staff explain the value and purpose of what youth are doing and/or what they expect them to accomplish.  |
| L  | <b>Are equitable and inclusive.</b> Staff encourage the participation of all youth, regardless of gender, race, language ability, or other evident differences among students. They try to engage students who appear isolated; they do not appear to favor a particular student or small cluster of students.   | S                                 | <b>Verbally recognize youth's efforts and accomplishment.</b> Staff acknowledge participation and progress in order to encourage youth.   |
| M  | <b>Show positive affect toward youth.</b> Staff tone is caring and friendly; they use positive language, smile, laugh, or share good-natured jokes. They refrain from threats, cutting sarcasm, or harsh criticism.  | T                                 | <b>Assist youth without taking control.</b> Staff refrain from taking over a task or doing something on behalf of the youth. Staff may coach, demonstrate, or employ scaffolding techniques that help youth to gain a better understanding of a concept or complete an action on their own.   |
| N  | <b>Attentively listen to and/or observe youth.</b> Staff look at youth when they speak, and acknowledge what youth have said by responding and/or reacting. They pay attention to youth as they complete a task.   | U                                 | <b>Ask youth to expand upon their answers and ideas.</b> Staff encourage youth to explain their answers, evidence, or conclusions. They may ask youth "why", "how" and "if" questions to get them to better clarify, articulate, or concretize their thoughts/ideas.  |
| O  | <b>Encourage youth to share their ideas, opinions and concerns.</b> Staff <u>actively elicit</u> youth ideas, ideas, opinions and concerns through discussion and/or writing.  | V                                 | <b>Challenge youth to move beyond their current level of competency.</b> Staff give constructive feedback that is meant to help youth to gauge their progress. Staff help youth determine ways to push themselves intellectually, creatively, and/or physically.  |
| P  | <b>Engage personally with youth.</b> Staff show interest in youth as individuals, ask about students' interest, know about and engage about events in their lives. This item does not refer to task-related questions, unless these questions are attempting to get youth to make connections to their own lives and/or opinions.  | W                                 | <b>Plan for/ask youth to work together.</b> Staff organize activities to encourage youth to work together. They plan for and/or ask youth to work together, solve problems, and/or accomplish tasks. This item goes beyond staff-assigned teams for competitive games and sports. In the case of staff-assigned teams, staff would also need to direct youth to collaborate, plan, devise, etc., in order for this item to be rated as staff asking youth to work together. |
| Q  | <b>Guide for positive peer interactions.</b> Staff intentionally encourage positive interactions and/or directly teach conflict resolution skills. They intervene constructively and calmly to address bullying or teasing behavior, redirecting youth and/or explaining or discussing why negative behavior is unacceptable. This item does not refer to behavior management, as described in above (see item K). | X                                 | <b>Employ two or more teaching strategies.</b> In order to engage students and reach those with different learning styles, staff diversify instructional strategies, which may include the use of two or more of the following: direct instruction, coaching, modeling, demonstrating, or others. This does not include coupling a staff-directed instruction with youth working together, as described above.  |
| CONTENT AND STRUCTURE: ACTIVITY              |  |                                   |   |
| Y  | <b>Is well organized.</b> Activity has clear goals/objectives; there is evidence of a clear lesson plan and process(es), and tasks can be conducted in the timeframe available. If special materials are needed, they are prepared and available.  | AA                                | <b>Involves a progression or the practice of skills.</b> Activities involve the progressive development, learning or practicing of skills needed to complete tasks or to participate.   |
| Z  | <b>Challenges students intellectually, creatively, and/or physically.</b> Activity's level of challenge is not so difficult that youth have trouble participating successfully and not so easy that youth master skills quickly and become bored.  | BB                                | <b>Requires analytic thinking.</b> Activity calls on students to think about and solve meaningful problems and/or juggle multiple activities or dimensions to accomplish a task.  |

## VASPOI CONSTRUCT SCORES

Before leaving the activity setting, provide an overall rating for each activity construct.

- 4 = **highly characteristic**. The construct is highly evident. Exemplars are observed frequently and consistently throughout the observation and with the majority of youth.
- 3 = **somewhat characteristic**. There is good evidence that the construct is present, but it is not pervasive.
- 2 = **somewhat uncharacteristic**. The construct was not characteristic of the activity; exemplars were observed infrequently or with only one staff or student.
- 1 = **highly uncharacteristic**. Little or no evidence of the construct is observed.

| Rating | Item # | Construct  | Illustrative Examples or Observer Comments |
|--------|--------|--|--|
|        | 1      | <b>Youth-directed relationships:</b> youth are supportive and respectful of one another and staff  |  |
|        | 2      | <b>Youth participation:</b> youth exhibit engagement in the activity; there are opportunities for their input and leadership   |  |
|        | 3      | <b>Staff-directed relationships:</b> adults provide guidance and emotional support; they take interest in the youth and their ideas                                  |  |
|        | 4      | <b>Skill building and mastery:</b> staff strategies are geared towards encouraging youth to push beyond their present level of competency                            |  |
|        | 5      | Activity content and structure: <b>activities are planned and well organized; challenge level is appropriate to age; there are opportunities for problem solving</b> |  |